

Present: Laila Barr; Dan Chavre; Ray Day, Jr.; Dave Elliott; Kumiko Huff; Jane Kuechle, vice-chair; Miranda Leidich; Joan Michaels; Carla Saulter; Roger Thordarson, chair

Excused: Kathy Dunn, Ed Miller, Tina Shereen

Staff: Barbara de Michele, Community Relations liaison; Andrew Schmid, Sound Transit marketing; Sharon Slebodnick, Transit Route Facilities Supervisor

Thordarsan opened the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

Bus Shelter Update

Slebodnick provided the group with an update on the bus shelter installation project, which is nearing completion. Metro accelerated the placement of bus shelters at locations designated for improvements based on a high number of customer boardings. The Transit Advisory Committee supported the accelerated schedule with a letter of advice in 2006.

LINK Light Rail Opening

Schmid provided the group with an overview of plans for the LINK light rail opening on July 18 and 19. "We've really been working on this for thirteen years," said Schmid, alluding to the creation of the Regional Transit Authority prior to the vote that authorized Sound Transit. "We're expecting large crowds to join us for the opening." Schmid explained that ST staff visited a light rail opening in Salt Lake City to walk through an actual opening and pinpoint potential problems.

To handle the crowds, Sound Transit will provide a number of bands and entertainment for waiting lines of customers. A system is in place to ensure that customers up and down the line will get relatively equal service. Staff will be out in force, providing informational brochures and customer contact at every station. Trains will run every 7 minutes throughout the first two days to handle the crowds. There will be both plain-clothes police and uniformed police at every station.

Sound Transit is using the event to promote mass transit in the Puget Sound area. The Cascade Bicycle Club and the Transportation Choices Coalition will be hosting membership recruitment tables. Sustainable Ballard will host an "un-drivers license" event.

In response to a question about expected ridership, Schmid said that ST is projecting 26,000 daily riders in 2009, and 46,000 daily riders in 2019. The ridership projections are very conservative, and throughout the United States projections have routinely under-estimated the daily ridership for light rail systems. Rising gas prices and other adverse conditions were not factored into the projection model.

Schmid said that he would welcome the opportunity to return in a few months to give the TAC an update on how the new system is working.

Letter of Advice

Members discussed a draft letter about bus shelter advertising and restrictive local ordinances. The letter would be sent to city councils within King County, urging them to alter ordinances to allow for bus shelter advertising. After reviewing the draft letter (see attached) with some minor modifications, Kuechle moved/Huff seconded that the letter be approved and mailed. The motion was passed unanimously.

TAC-ASAC

The group briefly discussed a meeting between the Transit Advisory Committee and the Accessible Services Advisory Committee. At the conclusion of the meeting, Laila Barr and Tina Shereen were selected to represent TAC at a proposed joint meeting.

Committee Business

- Jane gave a brief summary of her June visit to the Regional Transit Committee. She had e-mailed a report earlier to the members.
- De Michele reported that about twenty applications for TAC had been received to date. Recruitment will extend through the end of July.
- De Michele reported that registration materials for the Citizens Advisory Committee conference had been sent to staff liaisons at 24 Washington State transit agencies.

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Thordarson at 8:15 p.m.



To xxx City Council:

On behalf of the King County Metro Transit Advisory Committee, we are writing to express support for advertising on bus shelters. Current sign code ordinance in Seattle prohibits advertising in the public right of way. As a result, King County Metro loses tens of thousands of dollars annually in potential revenue, and citizens go without the enhanced service those funds could provide.

Access to public transportation is a keystone to our quality of life here in King County, and our future growth depends on the preservation and expansion of bus, light-rail and train service throughout the county. Even prior to the economic downturn, King County Metro was challenged with balancing the financial demands of maintaining both excellent service and high-quality facilities. Now, in the face of budget shortfalls, we need to look toward innovative funding approaches or risk seeing this vital asset compromised.

A standard Metro bus shelter costs \$20,000 to build. Fewer than 25% of our bus stops are currently equipped with any type of weather protection. In our Northwest climate, lack of bus shelters is a serious aggravation to Metro customers and a deterrent to many potential riders. Metro had budgeted plans to install 100 new shelters per year before the recent financial crisis. With current discussions focused on eliminating bus routes and/or reducing levels of service, the routine maintenance of existing shelters, let alone the construction of new ones, is threatened.

Many large cities, including Vancouver BC and San Francisco, as well as our neighbors in Pierce County, have turned to advertising on bus shelters to support public transit facilities. The current advertising contractor for King County Metro, Titan Outdoor, estimated in 2008 that bus shelter advertising could bring in \$5,000 per shelter per year. This cost-neutral source of revenue could support the construction of new bus shelters, allowing Metro to target its limited resources toward other budget items.

The King County Metro Transit Advisory Committee is composed of bus riders appointed by the King County Council to advise Metro, the county, local jurisdictions and the community at large regarding our transit services. As citizens of King County, we understand that restricting advertising in the public domain is one way to preserve the character of our communities. However, we can no longer afford to sacrifice much-needed transit service and facilities for the sake of an undisturbed sidewalk view.

Please take the time to review the city code that prevents advertising on Seattle's bus shelters and make the necessary changes that will allow King County Metro to continue to provide the excellent transportation services the people of Seattle have come to expect.

Sincerely,